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ABSTRACT

This volume is part of a series that is designed to promote stronger ties between the educational resources in the Northeast and Midwest and the economic development process. It challenges school superintendents, school board members, and their staffs to examine the impact of public schools on the economic health of their communities and recognize their roles in local development. The study describes the local public school system as one of the largest businesses in a community and casts the superintendent as the chief executive officer of a major enterprise. Discussion and examples guide administrators toward reviewing their roles in economic development. The monograph encourages them to reconsider traditional school system spending and its effects on the local economy and asks them to think more creatively about educational resources in a less familiar context--as economic and social development tools. A case study presents the efforts of the Columbus, Ohio, school system to maintain quality in teaching and help the local economy. Workbook-style questions following the text and a bibliography encourage administrators to assess their system's policies in this new context. (YLB)

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Education Inc.

How Schools Strengthen the Local Economy

Candice Brisson

Northeast-Midwest Institute:
The Center for Regional Policy

Education-Economic Development Series

3

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Education Inc.

How Schools Strengthen the Local Economy

Candice Brisson

Education-Economic Development Series

Northeast-Midwest Institute: The Center for Regional Policy

1986

Northeast-Midwest Institute: The Center for Regional Policy

David S. Harrison, Executive Director

The Northeast-Midwest Institute is a private, nonprofit organization devoted to research and public education on issues of regional concern. Since the Institute was established in 1977, its primary goal has been to ensure that federal policies are geographically equitable and responsive to the needs of the states that long have formed the nation's industrial heartland. The Institute's primary constituency is policy-makers from the Northeast and Midwest. Its work is used by corporate and labor leaders, academics, public interest groups and associations.

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Preface

This study challenges school superintendents, school board members, and their staffs to examine the impact of public schools on the economic health of their communities and recognize their roles in local development. The discussion analyzes elementary and secondary school systems in terms usually reserved for the private sector. It describes the local public school system as one of the largest businesses in a community and casts the superintendent as the chief executive officer of a major enterprise.

The four-chapter discussion and case study encourage school administrators to evaluate the effects of school procurement, payroll, real estate, and utilities management in more business-like ways. They also present examples of innovative school-based activities that improve the community's business environment and add to its quality of life. Workbook-style questions following the text encourage administrators to assess their system's policies in this new context. Administrators may choose to answer all the questions themselves or delegate sections to appropriate staff persons for completion. The questions can be answered in the space provided or in a separate notebook or file.

The concept of the school as a vigorous contributor to local growth goes beyond the familiar idea of the school as a community resource. It recognizes that schools are businesses that support the local economy. The Northeast and Midwest historically have invested heavily in their educational systems; creative management of these investments can extend the role of schools beyond traditional teaching. Administrators can point to this broader use of school resources to garner the support of local business owners and residents in school budget issues.

The Northeast-Midwest region, center of the country's industrial production, continues to undergo a fundamental economic transformation. Diverse and highly skilled human resources are the core of its economic advantage. Few assets are more critical to the region's revitalization than its public and private educational systems, which provide the fundamentals of work force training. This essential mission of schools is reason enough for public support and investment. Yet school resources contribute to economic growth in other ways as well. Many of these resources can be made more productive if schools' broader roles as economic entities are acknowledged explicitly and their roles in economic development promoted.

This is the third volume of a six-monograph series designed to promote stronger ties between the region's educational resources and the economic development process. Focusing on a single critical issue, each monograph encourages policy makers and their counterparts in business and academic institutions to translate available ideas into pragmatic so-

lutions. The series explores strategies that touch all educational levels, from local K-12 public school systems to higher education.

This education-economic development series is made possible through the generous support of the American Can Company Foundation.

1. School Spending and Economic Growth

Providing all children the opportunity for a good public education is one of this country's most important social and political goals. Its stature is reflected by the fact that school expenditures are one of the largest budget items of most states and localities. States in the Northeast and Midwest especially have a long tradition of striving for excellence in public education. Generally they have funded education from kindergarten to graduate school through times of surplus and austerity. Fourteen of the states in the region rank above the national average in student-teacher ratios and in expenditures per student.[1]

Schools do more than produce educated students; in their capacity as significant local businesses, they employ sometimes hundreds of people, consume a variety of goods, and require a broad range of services. Benefits flow both ways between a community and a school system. The community invests public tax dollars in the system. Schools repay this investment by preparing students for the working world, providing a range of job opportunities, and generating economic activities.

Education contributes to the public good much the same way as local businesses. In fact, public education and a healthy economy need each other to flourish. The educational enterprise must have the support of local citizens to secure funding, while good schools help create a climate that nurtures business development. The availability of high-quality education keeps families in an area and attracts new ones to maintain and increase the tax base. Good schools also contribute to the kind of living environment companies look for in choosing locations.

Businesses depend on schools for literate, well-rounded employees. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a shortage of workers in several occupational fields and higher entry-level skill requirements for even more jobs by the 1990s.[2] Businesses will need high-quality public schools to prepare people for these positions. They know that educational preparedness is vital for maintaining U.S. competitiveness in international markets.

Many states and localities in the Northeast and Midwest have grasped the importance of supporting the educational process and involving it in economic development. They understand the manifold relationships among a school system, the community, and the local economy. In a time of tight budgets, declining school enrollments, and heightened competition among public agencies for funding, school systems can champion increased educational budgets on grounds of benefits to students *and* contributions to community economic viability. Educators must show the public that schools are a resource serving broader business and community goals. Until they do, many taxpayers may conclude that school spending simply is a major bur-

den that, if anything, inhibits economic growth. Ronald Everett, a professor of educational administration, urges administrators to counter this assumption and to make the case publicly for schools' contribution to economic growth.

> (E)ducational leaders need to develop an awareness and a visibility in the area of economic development because the educational agency they lead or direct, whether a local board of education or a community college, will benefit through higher property values, increased community support for education and the schools, greater economic stability, enhanced educational and employment opportunities for students, and a stabilized or growing student population.[3]

State legislatures are feeling new pressures to compensate for reduced federal funding for some educational programs. States now provide about 49 percent of public education funds,[4] but will have to bear either a larger proportion of the costs or pass responsibility on to local governments. Therefore, school administrators have to build more local support and appreciation for education budgets.

School operations should be placed in a larger economic context. The school system frequently is one of the largest employers in the community. It may have the area's largest payroll, which circulates throughout local commercial and service establishments. The system may operate the largest fleet of motor vehicles. It may have extensive real estate holdings and function as the largest building manager in the area. It probably is the largest food service operator. Clearly, public educational systems are economic entities that play substantial roles in generating and supporting jobs in the local community.

In this analogy, the superintendent of schools is the chief executive officer of a major local corporation with the opportunity to lead the school system in achieving its full economic potential. Successful school administrators are both good managers and effective school program advocates. Discussion and examples in the following chapters guide administrators toward reviewing their roles in economic development. Toward this end, they are encouraged to reconsider traditional school system spending and its effects on the local economy. Next, they are asked to think more creatively about educational resources in a less familiar context—as economic and social development tools.

The discussion poses a variety of questions. How can the community realize a greater return on its investment through reduced costs or increased services? How can the dollars-and-cents value of the system to the local economy be maximized? Are there ways to target procurement to local businesses? Are economies of scale achievable in specific programs through cooperative programs with other schools? Do the transportation and food service operations offer possible training opportunities for students? What steps can the superintendent take to strengthen ties to the business community and to neighborhood groups?

Administrators are asked to consider the effectiveness of the examples presented in light of their own local circumstances and needs. The efforts of the Columbus, Ohio, school system to maintain quality teaching and help the local economy are pre-

sented in a case study. Finally, a sequence of questions relating to the major points in the discussion is presented in workbook style to lead administrators through an assessment exercise.

Superintendents have the resources at hand and authority to initiate changes based on the ideas presented in the following discussion. However, they should not bear sole responsibility for taking the necessary action. Business executives, government officials, and other community leaders should join in and contribute their talents and support to linking public education with community development. These two sectors may have conflicting interests at times, but their long-term goals are similar. Both want their community to prosper. With this in mind, every attempt should be made to resolve any apparent differences.

The following chapters are designed to help school administrators and other interested readers analyze their systems' many contributions to their local economies and identify new growth opportunities. Administrators who strengthen these connections prove the contention that school spending is directly and inextricably linked to a community's development and long-term vitality.

2. Reassessing Traditional School Expenditures

Administrators' assessment of the economic impact of the school district on the community should begin with an understanding of the numbers. Local governments spend almost twice as much on education as any other category. The school system usually is one of the largest employers in the local community, if not the largest. It also is a significant consumer of goods and services. Public school expenditures for basic needs—office and classroom supplies, transportation, food—exceeded $100 billion nationally for the 1983-1984 academic year.[5] The school system also may have the community's largest payroll, generating local and state taxes, thereby recycling revenues that support education. In addition to paying taxes, school system employees help create significant demand for local business products and services, such as housing, health care, financial services, and consumer goods. In short, a school system's overall effect on the local economy is more pervasive than administrators may realize. Therefore, school system CEOs must develop a new understanding of the dollar value of the school system in the community.

To be effective players in the local economy, educators must recognize that school districts cannot be viewed in isolation from the rest of the community. They should reevaluate traditional expenditures in the context of the local development climate, analyzing them as contributions to its economic health. Specifically, administrators should reexamine three aspects of traditional school outlays:

- how purchase and contract awards generate direct and subsequent benefits to the local economy;
- how school expenditures can be justified in a manner that builds business, citizen, and government support for school budgets; and
- how more economic advantages can accrue the community when school systems stretch resources and increase the spending power of each education dollar.

Econometric models have been developed to measure the impacts of industries and universities on a community. Some elements of these models are applicable to elementary and secondary school systems. With local business and employment data and some common sense calculations, administrators can develop economic impact estimates that are appropriate for local use. These include the amount of employee salaries likely to be spent locally on food, housing, and other consumer items; the extent of school system funds spent locally on supplies such as paper products and classroom materials; and services such as accounting, legal assistance, and maintenance. Such statistics, in turn, can provide the basis for discussions with the local chamber of commerce, city development planners, and community leaders who can provide further "real life" information on the

multiplier effects of these expenditures on new jobs, business development, and increased tax revenues.

Viewing school systems as major local economic forces and thinking of school superintendents as corporate executives triggers a host of related questions. How can administrators improve the public perception of the district as an economic entity in its own right? How can the schools generate a greater return to the community through increased services to students, businesses, local development organizations, and residents? How can standard services be delivered at lower cost? How can the schools help improve the area's quality of life, making it more attractive to potential businesses and residents? Administrators who respond effectively to these questions will promote greater appreciation for school expenditures and expand political support in the process.

School System Purchasing

School systems contribute greatly to community business activities through purchases of goods and services. Administrators should orient procurement policies toward local merchants because increased sales volume translates into additional jobs and tax revenues—and more business support of education. It may not be practical or possible to acquire items locally that are purchased in large quantities or through national wholesalers, such as textbooks. But administrators should examine local businesses and identify procurement opportunities from this market. School districts have varying amounts of discretion in purchasing goods and services. Small communities may have only one appropriate manufacturer or distributor or none at all. In such cases, a large portion of goods and services have to come from nonlocal sources. Large city systems, however, have greater opportunities to solicit competitive bids from local companies.

The power of school purchasing becomes apparent when the yearly totals for supplies are compiled. For example, Florida school districts each spent an average of $4.6 million for materials and supplies, $4 million for food services, and $308,500 for acquisition and construction of school facilities in the 1982-1983 school year.[6] Even a relatively small item can become a major purchase. The Columbus, Ohio, school system spends more than $1 million each year just for milk (see the case study). Taken together, these expenditures can increase a community's production of goods and services significantly—a boost to the local equivalent of the gross national product. Properly targeted and orchestrated, local purchases can play a vital role in business development and growth and help recycle funds within the community.

This type of activity has important secondary or multiplier effects in the local economy. Schools are comparable to businesses in that purchases of goods or services translate into income for those who have provided the products or services. Some of this income will be spent on additional goods and services. These new expenditures, in turn, generate more economic activity which may continue for several cycles. Thus, each dollar spent by the system will create additional economic benefits, sometimes as much as four times the original expenditure. School administrators need to recognize how this multiplier

effect works; they can then establish locally targeted procurement policies that, in effect, "multiply" the impact of school purchases.

Procurement always should be carried out in a fiscally prudent manner to ensure that school district funds are used efficiently. At the same time, administrators should make every effort to purchase supplies from capable local dealers. Otherwise, the school system loses an opportunity to contribute to the local economy and deprives itself of a natural budget ally. Some school procurement policies may limit the ability of local merchants to bid on contracts. For example, small businesses may find bonding requirements prohibitive. Others may find the paperwork requirements burdensome or payment schedules too slow. Administrators should evaluate procurement procedures to identify and, if possible, remove impediments that inhibit local bidding unnecessarily.

School district purchasing policies can be shaped to target an area as large as a state or as small as a neighborhood. School business may be channeled to distressed neighborhoods as part of local economic development programs. Sometimes "local" boundaries are difficult to define; for example, northern Virginia, southern Maryland, and the District of Columbia are considered part of the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Therefore, school officials must decide whether they should restrict their market to the home city or state or should purchase from merchants in another jurisdiction where goods are cheaper or more readily available. Again, there are no standard answers. Local factors will influence administrators' decisions on these purchasing issues.

Local procurement can be used in conjunction with federal and state business development programs to stimulate growth. School officials can work with regional offices of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and state and municipal development agencies to identify viable businesses to provide supplies and services to schools. Many states and cities have selected certain types of businesses or geographic areas for development assistance. School systems may want to channel business to competent companies in these categories. These and other links formed among school, government, and business officials foster business success and cost savings for the schools.

To alert firms to possible business opportunities, school officials could produce a brochure describing a system's procurement policies and encouraging them to seek school business. The brochure should explain how bidding procedures are carried out, the laws governing school purchasing, and a list of people to contact in the system. Copies can be distributed through the chamber of commerce, professional organizations, and direct mailings. A comprehensive and clear procurement brochure can help avoid misunderstandings often associated with purchasing, such as procedural peculiarities and accusations of favoritism.

Some communities already have this type of brochure for federal procurement; a version for local purchasing would be useful. School administrators can draw on the experience of city and state officials involved in procurement when composing guidelines for their school system. Designating one staff person as a contact can simplify the answering of procurement inquiries and the bid-

ding and negotiations process. This person could coordinate publicity, oversee preparation and distribution of a brochure, and serve as liaison between businesses and school officials.

In some cases, "buy local" efforts may conflict with low-bid purchasing policies. State and local laws also may limit discretion. Administrators have to maintain a balance between local preference policies and the need to buy at the lowest price no matter what the origin. Administrators possessing some flexibility should consider the degree of price differences and the amount of local business generated as well as product quality. Even if local goods and services are more expensive than nonlocal ones, the benefits of patronizing local firms, from better service to good will, may offset the higher prices. Administrators should, to the extent possible, include these factors as they make their spending decisions. Economists term this as "cost-benefit analysis," an approach that weighs estimates of relevant variables, relationships, and benefits against costs.[7]

Finally, administrators should not discount a related procurement issue—transportation. Schools spend substantial amounts for the purchase, maintenance, and support of vehicles to transport students and administrative personnel. These buses, cars, and trucks affect the local economy through contracts for drivers, repairs, insurance, and fuel. Depending on the district's arrangement, vehicles may be stored at a central location, incurring additional spending for rent. Transportation expenditures should be considered in the same policy light as purchases described above.

Administrators should increase the school system's purchases in the local economy. They could:

- Establish a "buy local" policy whenever possible.
- Identify businesses capable of providing services or supplies, and solicit bids from them.
- Find a knowledgeable contact person to handle business inquiries.
- Identify those policies, such as bonding requirements, that shut out local business bids and change them. The chamber of commerce and other business groups can provide ideas, suggest alternatives, and notify businesses of contract opportunities.
- Produce a brochure or find other means of informing businesses of school policies and regulations affecting purchasing processes.
- Contact appropriate program officials to tie into local, state, or federal business assistance programs such as SBA loan programs, state enterprise zones, or local programs that target specific neighborhoods.
- Establish, to the extent possible, "buy local" policies for purchasing new vehicles and insurance, service and maintenance contracts, school uniforms, etc., from local businesses.

Payroll and Staff

Expenditures for payroll and staff place a school system in the mainstream of a community's economic operations, even though they may have less obvious paybacks than direct purchases. Quite simply, the larger the staff, the larger the school "corporation" and the greater its local economic impact.

A major hurdle for many school administrators to overcome is convincing local businesses and taxpayers that payroll increases are worthwhile. The fact is that money for additional staff positions creates a return on investment. It increases schools' ability to educate young people and provide services that build up the local business environment, perhaps making the difference between entrepreneurial survival and failure. Using the same argument presented earlier, administrators can illustrate how salaries are put back into the community through purchases made and taxes paid, and thus are not a drain on the economy. School officials should develop a formula that measures the approximate net cost of hiring personnel. Such a formula would factor in salaries paid, local taxes generated, spending per staff person, and administrative costs to the system, and other items.

Administrators usually have little short-term flexibility to stimulate the payroll and or the local economy in hard dollar terms. Tight budgets frequently prevent hiring additional personnel. As a way of working around budget constraints, some school systems have hired staff jointly with other geographically close school districts or with government agencies. For example, different districts may have common needs for part-time special education, art, administrative, or other personnel. Joint hiring is a cost-effective way to recruit and fill similar positions in different offices or districts. It allows schools to offer a broader range of services that produce economic advantages and community benefits—all of which improve the overall "quality of life" for present and prospective companies and residents.

Over half the states have set up educational service agencies to expand their educational programs. These agencies are cooperative groups supported by member districts that pool resources to purchase and share the services of counselors, librarians, foreign language teachers, and school psychologists. Pooling resources enables these districts to hire personnel that few could afford on their own. In Minnesota, Education Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs) were authorized in 1976 to help school systems meet specific educational needs of students and provide educational planning on a regional basis. In addition to aiding secondary schools, ECSUs allow districts to establish post-secondary, vocational, adult, and community education courses.[8]

Ideally, the effective delivery of services by these cooperative agencies raises the educational level in the community. These gains, in turn, improve both the work readiness of the labor force and its adaptability to new businesses. Students receive a better and more diverse education and are prepared for the work world. Adults get the chance to sharpen their skills. Businesses can count on better educated high school graduates and working adults, who are likely to be more productive and require less training. The community's investment saves companies money and makes them more likely to hire additional employees. Again, the economic advantage of these services and programs, while less obvious, nonetheless is important in stimulating growth.

Another way to expand staff at little or no cost is to use trainees, especially for clerical and other nonteaching functions. Depending on local policies and program rules, some federal Job Training

Partnership Act (JTPA) programs reimburse a portion of the wages of on-the-job trainees. Private training centers may welcome opportunities to place participants in real-world settings as part of their curricula. Local universities may have programs in which students can serve internships or work part-time in schools to gain experience in their chosen fields—librarianship, computer technology, accounting, and so on.

Drawing on volunteers can expand a district's ability to provide services. Parents associations, senior citizen groups, and similar organizations are likely sources of volunteer help. However, some districts have met with objections from labor unions over their use. School officials should be sensitive to this issue and deal with it as needed. The purpose of volunteers is to perform services for which the district can not afford to pay, not to displace workers.

Both trainees and volunteers can be especially valuable in expanding a school system's overall breadth of services. By tapping these resources, school administrators can reach beyond their main mission of educating students to offer technical assistance and provide social and cultural programs to enrich the community.

Administrators should redefine their staffing policies, and their effects on the local economy. They could:

- Develop an income model or formula to assess the primary, secondary, and multiplier effects of the school system payroll on the local economy.
- Build support for more staff positions by determining what percentage of new income will be spent on local products, services, and taxes.
- Initiate cooperative hiring arrangements, such as Minnesota's ECSUs, with nearby districts and perhaps the state department of education.
- Stretch the personnel budget by pooling resources with other districts, creating on-the-job training opportunities through professional and technical internships, and using volunteers from local citizens organizations or parent groups to fill personnel gaps.

Real Estate

Real estate holdings, including both land and improvements, are undoubtedly any school district's largest asset. They represent an enormous investment of public education funds and—in most places—untapped economic development resources that can be developed in many ways.

All school systems, especially those with older buildings, have large maintenance and repair budgets. Although in-house staff do much of the work, numerous projects require outside contractors. Like supply purchases, this capital plant investment can be targeted to local businesses. Repair, renovation, and construction activities promote the same economic multipliers and spin-off benefits as other types of school system investments and contribute to local job creation and retention. Equally important, they generate good will and greater appreciation of the school system by the area's small business owners and employees.

Expenditures for buildings and grounds in this context have more relevance to the community as a whole. Administrators should create local contractor preference policies similar to those for procurement. Administrators again

would have to make judgments on bids and their relative benefits to the local community. As with procurement, a service-provider brochure would be a valuable tool to explain and promote this policy.

A decline in enrollments has left some areas with empty school rooms and closed buildings. Empty buildings are a drain on the local economy; they incur costs for maintenance, security, and insurance that should go to productive uses. Maintenance of an empty school building in New York City can cost from $20,000 to $85,000 per year.[9] Ironically, these situations thrust upon school officials another way to realize the economic potential of school real estate: turning these facilities to other uses. They should not be allowed to stand empty; this is a waste of prime space that could be used by a community group or rented to a government agency. Administrators can boost the local "return" on real estate investments by using space in school buildings creatively.

This prescription is particularly relevant to the Northeast and Midwest, where numerous communities have suffered drops in school populations over the last ten years.[10] Areas already characterized as "declining" cannot afford to carry the visible and symbolic burden of closed, underused school buildings. Productive reuses of surplus real estate for shops, offices, or community centers can help counter an image of economic stagnation and encourage new development. Chapter 3 contains a more detailed discussion of alternative uses for school property.

Administrators should integrate their real estate policies into local development strategies. They could:

- Conduct an annual survey of the district's real estate holdings (both buildings and land), calculating their worth, annual maintenance costs, and related expenses.
- Solicit opinions on the relative value of holdings from local planning officials and realty boards.
- Identify local contractors for repair and modernization projects.
- Consider a local preference policy for such activities.
- Prepare a contractor-bidding brochure or fact sheet which includes a sample school system contact.
- Identify private-sector or public-service uses for the unneeded buildings.

Utilities

Schools usually have little choice in purchasing their fuel, electricity, water, and sewer services even though they are large-volume customers. Except in larger metropolitan areas, only one utility exists for each service, allowing no competitive pricing. In most instances, utilities bill each school individually, rather than treating the system as one customer. Administrators could negotiate with utilities for discounts based on the high volume consumed throughout the system. Few school systems have the ability to shift consumption to off-peak periods. In this case, savings and efficient uses should be introduced in other ways. As major businesses, school systems can exert more clout than they imagine

Some school districts have made great strides in reducing their utility costs through innovative conservation programs and negotiating agreements with various utility companies. These ef-

forts merit consideration because substantial savings free up resources to expand other school services. Also, as major consumers, schools are excellent candidates for conservation efforts. Many utilities are willing to help schools save energy, which helps them with more efficient load management. For example, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) helps schools in its area find ways to conserve energy through its Solar Technology Outreach Program. Schools can reduce energy costs associated with new construction, renovations, and additions by requesting TVA's computer modeling services, thermal performance calculations, recommendations for energy-saving devices, and cost-effectiveness studies. Schools participating in this program have reported estimated consumption reductions of up to 52 percent for heating, cooling, and lighting.[11]

Schools can serve as public testing sites for innovative energy designs or programs. The appropriate school office can arrange with a utility to be a model or participant in an experiment in exchange for discounted services. In return, utilities can try out their designs or equipment inexpensively in easily accessible and often-visited sites, Such projects encourage the community to adopt new ideas, and both schools and utilities benefit from the good publicity. Local building suppliers also may be receptive to using schools as models for new and innovative products in exchange for discounts.

Schools can realize energy savings through the use of energy-efficient designs even without the help of a utility. The Fort Stewart Elementary School in Hinesville, Georgia, cut its air-conditioning requirements by 65 percent and reduced overall energy consumption in its late 1960s building by two-thirds using passive solar heating, active solar hot water, and various other means of energy conservation. Abrams Elementary School in Bessemer, Alabama, installed passive solar collectors and now uses approximately one-third as much energy as the average area elementary school.[12] School officials should check with local design firms to see if they will donate time and advice on how to incorporate energy conservation measures. Some conservation improvements might be added by the school's shop students in exchange for course credit or pay.

The Philadelphia public school system saved $3 million over ten months in 1984 through a conservation compaign involving all 250 schools. With the promise that saved energy dollars would be converted into education dollars, a committee of maintenance, administration, and teaching representatives formulated a low-cost conservation plan. Each school was responsible for cutting its energy consumption. As an incentive, the system returned 40 percent of each school's annual savings for its discretionary use. Schools channeled their savings to educational programs, thus expanding their abilities to meet student's needs and provide a broader range of community services. Public recognition of conservation programs has helped to improve public confidence in the management of the school system.[13]

The Philadelphia program, like other examples, did not require extensive investments or costly staff time. It simply required each school to do its best to save energy. All school districts should investigate conservation mea-

sures such as those suggested here. The potential is there to save a significant amount of scarce school dollars.

Administrators should look for savings through efficient energy use. They could:

- Explore with utility companies the possibility of considering the entire school system as one customer so it can receive discounts for quantity use.
- Adopt energy conservation programs, such as weatherization of older buildings, and use shop students and maintenance staff to help where possible.
- Allow schools to be used as sites for testing new conservation designs or equipment in exchange for discounts.
- Incorporate energy efficiency into daily school operations.
- Seek donated time and advice from a local design firm.

3. Widening School Resources For Business and Community

The preceding discussion called on administrators to reexamine the role of the school system, and their own roles, in terms usually applied to private-sector enterprises. School systems are economic units by virtue of their assets and spending power. As such they stimulate the local economy directly, a fact that many educators believe should be better understood by the public.

School administrators and school board members are in a position to make wider use of their influence, physical plants, and financial resources to help local businesses and the entire community. Increasingly they see this kind of service as part of their duties as educators; a growing number view their classrooms as having more dimensions. Individual administrators and their staffs must decide how active a role they and their systems will play. A strong presence can bring a school system to the forefront of a community's economic activities, with resulting benefits for community groups and the educational system.

School systems can promote local development prospects, strengthen local businesses, enhance educational and recreational opportunities for residents, and build up community services. These elements must be present for a jurisdiction to nurture a healthy environment for private investment and growth. Economists acknowledge that the rate of economic growth is closely related to numerous physical and social conditions in addition to private investment decisions.[14] Levels of educational achievement, poverty or public services, for example, can add to or constrict local growth. Therefore, to understand the economic function of a school system, factors affecting the "quality of life" in a community must be considered.

Research in educational literature and recent interviews show that administrators are leading their districts toward participating in substantial, if less traditional, business and community activities. Specifically, many have recognized the importance of good schools to economic development. Some school systems are even putting their underused facilities to more profitable use. Others have seized opportunities to run cooperative programs with businesses and government agencies, including community planning agencies, the city councils, and mayor's offices. Many systems have expanded the school's basic function of educating young people to include work force training and adult education. Others have found school involvement in health care issues important for their areas. These kinds of activities build and sustain a school district's involvement with community affairs. They can play an important part in creating a strong economy and improving a community's livability.

Education as a Development Incentive

A recognition of schools' importance in developing the economy should be a major element of school-community cooperative ventures. The quality of the local school system is an important factor in business selection of locations. Administrators should work closely with the local chamber of commerce and city officials to publicize this asset. They may want to prepare a synopsis of educational services and attributes that includes a discussion of school facilities, teaching staff, rank of students' test scores, and other positive features. This document can be part of a larger community marketing strategy. School officials should make the initial contact with local officials, if necessary, toward getting started.

The quality of the local educational system is especially important to businesses for two reasons. Studies have found that employee satisfaction with their jobs is affected by their perception of their children's education. Also, businesses have found that their success in attracting and retaining a skilled and motivated work force is grounded in effective local elementary and secondary schools.

A 1979 report of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress found that quality of schooling is one of the principal elements of a favorable business climate in central cities. It concluded that people perceive the business climate as roughly parallel to a city's livability; if one is good, so is the other. Many of the executives interviewed stated that no financial offer could persuade them to move to an undesirable location.[16] Areas with low ratings for schools and other quality-of-life factors may find that tax breaks and financing packages are not enough to attract new businesses. In short, favorable public perception of local school quality is crucial to a community's fashioning a positive image and assuring long-term economic health. High per-capita student spending levels and the rich variety of school-related services found in Northeastern and Midwestern states should be viewed in this light—as important business development inducements.

Cooperation between school administrators and other public officials can lead to a pooling of educational and community resources. These two groups can undertake activities that the school system or the community would be unable to sponsor individually. The combination of personnel, funds, and facilities can add to a location's range of services, including business assistance, that make an area more attractive for development.

Cooperation of school and business leaders is equally important. Administrators should become well acquainted with local businesspersons through the chamber of commerce, private industry council, and other groups. Parent-teacher groups and neighborhood organizations also are allies for school officials. Administrators can organize and lead regular discussions of school-community marketing plans for all parties involved. These groups should receive reports of school board and individual schools' work on educational goals such as teaching staff improvements and student retention rates.

Administrators should find ways to work with other local officials in promoting the quality of schooling as an economic development incentive.

They could:

- Initiate or improve working relationships with representatives from business groups, the planning department, city or county council, and the mayor's office.
- Make these representatives aware of the role of school quality in business location decisions.
- Prepare a synopsis of educational services for them, and brief them on the interrelationship of business development and education quality.
- Help attract business to the area by presenting the synopsis in meetings with corporate leaders or by conducting tours of education facilities.
- Identify any community groups or government offices with which the school district can undertake cooperative projects.
- Promote regular discussions to update all participating groups about activities underway.

Surplus Resources

Many school districts with declining enrollments or shifting residence patterns have "surplus" facilities. Some studies have shown that communities with closed schools are perceived as declining overall. They also show that the value of nearby real estate tends to decrease when a school is closed.[16] A closed school not only fosters a negative image, it burdens the local system with very real maintenance and security costs.

School officials must know the number and value of all facilities and sites under their jurisdiction. This information can be gathered most efficiently by conducting a comprehensive survey and updating it periodically. It should note characteristics such as location and condition, and marketable features such as auditoriums, food service facilities, gyms, labs, and parking. With this knowledge, administrators can work with local development, government, and social service agencies to find other uses for empty buildings.

One option is to sell, loan, or convert the buildings for use by other government agencies or private businesses. If officials are hesitant to sell outright, they can negotiate multi-year leases for the property. This way buildings can generate revenues for the school system now but can be returned to classroom use if needed later. Sale-lease back options, while not commonly used for schools, might be considered.

In Medina, Ohio, an outdated junior high was sold to the county for conversion to office space. The school district used the proceeds to build a new school in a high-growth area and the county obtained an administrative building for less than the cost of constructing a new one.[17] The city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and its board of education worked out a creative alternative-use arrangement. A multipurpose center, owned jointly by the city and school board, was added to an existing elementary school. When a new elementary school was constructed, the city purchased the old building for a small fee to house a variety of community activities and a new public swimming pool. The school board still owns the gym, which the city uses in off hours; the locker rooms are owned cooperatively.[18]

School buildings are ideal for some specialized educational and public purposes, especially those with auditoriums, parking lots, and food service facilities. They

can serve as sites for small business incubators or technical centers, adult education classes, job training programs, or community meeting space. A local university or community college may wish to lease this space for off-campus programs.

The Downriver Community Conference (DCC), a 16-city public service consortium headquartered in Southgate, Michigan, converted the unused Schafer High School into a comprehensive business and training center. The DCC complex includes a small business incubator, a job clearinghouse, and a Small Business Assistance Center. The layout of the old school was suitable for the assistance center, whose staff members offer counseling to individual business owners and managers as well as sponsor larger workshops and forums. A Michigan venture capital company has opened an office in a former classroom. The DCC operation, which has received national acclaim, trained and placed hundreds of persons in 1984. It also provided information and technical and financial assistance to over 500 small companies.[19]

Horizon Middle School became a focal point of Aurora, Colorado, when it was refurbished as a multipurpose community center. In addition to seventh- and eighth-grade classrooms, Horizon houses a branch of the public library, a community recreation center, a Boy Scout troop, soccer teams, homeowners associations, and two church groups on Sundays. The result is that many more people are involved with Horizon than if it had remained as only a middle school. Even people without children in school now take an interest in educational issues and support schooling as vital to their community.[20]

The purchase and conversion of surplus school buildings by private developers can be attractive propositions for school boards and tax assessors. Unused schools with sound structures and convenient locations have high potential for conversion. Renovations of abandoned schools in central city areas for housing, offices, and other commercial are among the most common rehabilitation and historic preservation activities. Such projects help further local economic development activities and generate considerable tax revenues. The Franklin Square School 100 in an older section of Baltimore, Maryland, now contains 65 apartments for the elderly. The project, coordinated by a local businessman, was financed with tax-exempt bonds and a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A historic school in downtown Dallas was restored and refitted as the offices of an oil pipeline and drilling firm.[21] In Ithaca, New York, a high school once slated for demolition now houses shops, offices, and apartments.[22]

In many cases, restoration or renovation is less expensive than new construction. Older buildings are eligible for rehabilitation tax credits, which can be incorporated into a project in two ways. The cash value of the credit can permit investors to raise additional funds; with less due in federal taxes, they can devote more cash to financing project debt. Secondly, the additional cash flow stemming from a reduced federal tax burden can provide developers with a suitable return on investment—which may mean lower rents for tenants. In either case, rehabilitation tax credits add to a property's real estate value while preserving its historical or architectural features.

Conversion of schools may face

citizen opposition and restrictions from local laws. Some are located in residential areas where zoning laws do not permit commercial or office uses. Local supporters may be able to lobby for a zoning variance if the project will benefit the community. For example, they could argue that the neighborhood economy will profit or local residents will have access to needed services. Proposed uses deemed controversial or incompatible with the surrounding area may require revamping to blend better with the character of the community.

Fairfield, California, incorporated the site of an obsolete elementary school into a 54-acre parcel assembled for a large shopping mall complex, which it planned for development in increments. The school structure was outdated for contemporary student needs and located far from areas with school-aged children. The city sold off portions of the site as development progressed and made substantial profits on the transactions. In the final phases of development, Fairfield gained an equity position in the mall's leasable space. Some of the proceeds were earmarked to replace the old school, which was demolished, with a modern facility nearer residential areas.[23]

Administrators should consider innovative uses of surplus school property that would benefit the local economy. They could:

- List attractive characteristics such as location, historic value, parking, and recreational facilities in annual real estate surveys.
- Find out if any local community groups, colleges, training providers, or businesses need facilities for meetings, classes, training programs, or business incubation space.
- Define the pros and cons of selling property rather than keeping it in the school inventory.
- Determine how sale proceeds will be used, such as improving other facilities or expanding business outreach efforts to build community support.
- Explore the economic and tax feasibility of leasing space or sale-lease back arrangements of the property.
- Identify the community's particular economic development needs and preferences for school neighborhoods: shops and other small businesses, housing, offices, or social service centers.
- Investigate any legal restrictions on selling, leasing, or renting school property.

Administrators may allow other organizations to conduct their activities in underused classrooms in their schools. These arrangements would help expand existing community services. A community saves when it can run programs at existing facilities with vacant or underused space rather than constructing new ones. The following are examples of services carried out at schools that benefit the entire community.

School-Business-Community Service Partnerships

School systems are uniquely suited to help overburdened local governments provide community services more efficiently or expand their range of services. These efforts can help a community enhance its image with prospective businesses, while freeing up resources for other needs. For example, schools can extend normal school cafeteria operations to provide meals for elderly and indi-

gent persons. The East Meadow school district on Long Island, New York, has operated a program for several years that allows senior citizens to buy meals in school cafeterias. This popular program is self-supporting. Senior citizens get well-balanced, hot meals for a fraction of the cost in a restaurant. School and local officials believe that bringing together senior citizens and youths is beneficial to the community.[24]

Schools also can open language labs after hours for bilingual education classes or cooperate in orientation programs for recent immigrants. Large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees have settled in Arlington County, Virginia. The local government opened a specially staffed center in a public school where they learn English, American customs, and get help finding jobs. The program reduces their dependency on public assistance and welfare, and eases their transition into the community's economic mainstream. The Arlington program's federal funding allows it to provide services free of charge to most of the 400 participants.[25] School administrators in areas with concentrations of immigrants do a special service for the community with such nontraditional programs. In using existing facilities and resources, programs like Arlington's permit more targeted and effective help. Graduates of such programs undoubtedly will become better employees and business owners as a result of the smoother assimilation process. Those who start businesses will repay community efforts by creating jobs and generating tax revenues.

Other possibilities exist for innovative programs to further specific community growth objectives or address certain citizen needs. Promoting such programs is an important but usually overlooked role the school system can play in economic development. Adopting the right approach is a matter of matching a school system's strengths with the needs of the community, including the business sector. For instance, in some communities, budget restraints have limited library hours and services. School systems could open their libraries to the public after school hours or combine operations with local public library systems. A pooling of school and community funds may be enough to expand a school's library to fill community needs partially, if only for an interim period. Small business owners or prospective entrepreneurs will welcome the availability of technical materials that many school collections contain.

In Aurora, Colorado, public and school officials collaborated on a project to provide better library services by locating a branch of the public library at Horizon Middle School, mentioned previously. The school district provides space, furniture, shelving, and audiovisual equipment. The school and library buy their books and materials through separate budgets, but items are ordered by one person and computerized on a single system to avoid duplication. Both parties contribute to staff salaries and share the benefits. Students have a larger library, open longer than a typical school library, and can order books from any public library branch via the computer network. The expanded library receives free space and pays less for staff salaries and materials.

Beside these immediate gains, this collaborative approach yields two intangible benefits. It attracts people to the school who would not ordinarily think about educational issues. More importantly, it

expands the library's capacity to serve the needs of neighborhood residents and those seeking local business information.[26]

Most schools have equipment and personnel that could help area businesses greatly if they were more accessible. Offering services free to businesses in need of help might be best, providing the system could afford it. However, charging minimal prices for services might be more practical; the fees would cover educational costs, thus saving public dollars, while still providing business services at less than market rate. For example, schools could invite small businesses to use the school's computers after classroom hours for a nominal fee. Proceeds could be applied to maintaining existing computers, purchasing new equipment and software, or diverted to other uses. Businesses unable to afford their own computers or training would benefit most. This type of service could be an important part of an economic development incentive package if properly structured and marketed to the business sector.

The St. Louis Park, Minnesota, school system became involved actively in the local business community out of a conviction that schools should provide life-long learning. Several years ago, administrators commissioned a survey of 50 local businesses to determine their needs and what services they could offer the community. School officials analyzed the survey results carefully to determine what role the school system could play in assisting local businesses. They decided to develop training courses in word processing and computing, assertiveness training, listening skills, creative problem solving, and use of video equipment. The program also taught local doctors, accountants, and city employees how to use automated business equipment. Businesses, in turn, provided schools with needed services, such as specialized training for teachers and staff, and set up student internships.[27]

The St. Louis Park system has developed a close relationship with Honeywell, Inc., over the last three years. Honeywell expressed a need for both staff development and counseling seminars to help employees advance within the company and reduce the chances of job dissatisfaction and low productivity. The school system responded by loaning staff to write and conduct a training program. Since then, Honeywell specialists have trained one of the school system's job counselors in interviewing techniques who, in turn, trains Honeywell's job counselors. Other cooperative projects have examined employee effectiveness, shared teaching techniques, and developed seminars for technical employees on presentation skills.

So far, these projects have taken place mainly in summer months; now both are considering the possibility of exchanging staff for an entire semester. No fees are charged because school officials believe the services traded and benefits of cooperating with businesses are more valuable than money. With each proposal, representatives from the schools and businesses meet, then decide how they can help each other. The resulting arrangement always includes mutual commitments and exchanges of resources. The school system undertook an extensive curriculum review and training project for Honeywell; in return, the company introduced teachers to its latest technology and gave internships to students. This cooperation helps the schools prepare students to deal

with the kinds of technologies they will be expected to handle in future jobs.

The school system markets the program to ensure that as many businesses as possible know what the schools can offer them. The St. Louis Park Chamber of Commerce created a staff position, funded by several local school districts, to coordinate these arrangements. The schools now have established such a reputation that many businesses approach them to establish programs.[28]

Schools also can use their facilities and staff to assist unemployed and displaced workers. Many schools already help their students with job placement and career counseling, which also could be offered to unemployed workers in the community. Some schools have set up interviews for workers with school counselors, provided telephones for job searches, helped with resume preparation, and contacted potential employers. This cooperation increases the quality of services for the unemployed—which neither community nor worker might be able to afford otherwise. When school, municipal, and business resources are combined, the sponsoring organization can offer better standard services and try more innovative approaches at lower cost.

These programs improve the quality of the local work force and help people adapt to changing economic circumstances. This is particularly important to the Northeast and Midwest, where so many workers have been displaced by slack demand and plant closings. School-sponsored special programs for unemployed or dislocated workers, as well as first-time job seekers, improve their chances of finding suitable jobs and their job skills in general. A continuing process of worker training is a must for areas pursuing economic growth.

Administrators should offer the school system's services and resources to improve the community's economic development potential and quality of life. They could:

- Identify school resources, such as computers, audiovisual equipment, or library collections, that would improve services to local businesses, neighborhood associations, and senior citizen groups.
- Consider offering special summer or evening classes for small business owners and their staffs.
- Explore the feasibility of trading school services for business or individual resources, as the St. Louis Park, Minnesota, system has done.
- Identify segments of the population, such as recent immigrants and displaced workers, needing special services that schools can provide.

Training and Adult Education Programs

School systems are natural partners for business groups and nonprofit organizations involved in adult training and education. A system can work jointly with employers and community officials to plan training programs and adult education classes, open school facilities for after-hours sessions, and distribute information on education and training options to the community.

Labor is the most important production factor in nearly all businesses and industries. The presence of skilled and appropriately trained workers is a key consideration for investors or business owners who want to

launch a new enterprise or expand an existing one. Therefore, school administrators should work with local businesses to adapt their schools' employment-oriented courses to the local job market. They also could look for opportunities to improve the existing work force and thus strengthen their communities' economic viability.

Many school districts are helping to train local residents through the federal Job Training Partnership Act. JTPA specifically encourages cooperative efforts among local business, training, and education groups to design suitable training programs. A Private Industry Council (PIC) in each local area determines JTPA training program priorities. By law, the majority of PIC members must be owners, managers, or executives of local businesses. The remaining members must represent educational institutions and other local organizations with interest and expertise in employment and training, such as economic development agencies and community service groups.

PICs and local officials determine jointly how federal training funds will be spent. Acceptable options include job counseling, remedial education and basic skills instruction, GED preparation, classroom-based occupational education, on-the-job training, bilingual education, and education-to-work transition activities for youths and adults. The school system can contribute personnel and space to these programs or become a contractor to run programs for the PIC. Whether through donations or by contract, administrators can broaden the schools' regular offerings and the community's human resources base with their involvement in PIC-sponsored training activities.

School systems also can provide on-the-job training opportunities in the schools themselves. Using PIC trainees in school-related jobs produces benefits for both. Trainees receive "hands on" experience while the PIC partially reimburses the schools for their wages. For example, when the school system has openings on its clerical, maintenance, or food service staffs, it could fill them with PIC trainees who would learn the job while doing it and eventually become permanent employees. Also, the school system can hire graduates of other training programs in the community for its entry-level positions. As one of the community's principal employers, schools should take steps such as these to promote a healthy local labor market.

Schools can improve work force skills and raise literacy rates through special courses for adults. The St. Paul, Minnesota, system developed an unusual basic education program that is highly responsive to the special needs and circumstances of adults. Established jointly by the school system and several area foundations, the Technology for Literacy Center (TLC) opened in May 1985. Located at an inner-city shopping center, TLC offers convenient walk-in services from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily to accommodate adults' diverse schedules in an unintimidating atmosphere. Its target audience is persons 18 years and older with reading, writing, or mathematical skills measuring below an eighth-grade level.

TLC is a technology-based teaching operation using computers, video cassette recorders, and slides to encourage students to learn at their own pace. Its staff set up individualized learning programs based on packaged soft-

ware specially designed to teach basic skills. TLC's major goal is to raise St. Paul's literacy level. But it also intends to train operators of educational programs in the use of advanced technology, carry out joint research with the University of Minnesota and Carnegie-Mellon University on teaching with technology, and raise matching funds for similar programs. TLC hopes to serve 1,300 participants over the next three years, 300 the first year and 500 in each of the next two.

The strong support given to the project by the St. Paul community promises to make it a vehicle for attacking local literacy problems.[29] Prior to its opening, TLC invited various community groups to the center for an introduction to its purpose and methods of teaching. An advertising agency donated time and advice to TLC to help attract adult learners. The contributing foundations are all located in the St. Paul area, and community representatives sit on the center's advisory council. The project recruited volunteer tutors from the community to help students get started and solve problems that arise.

Many areas have high rates of adult illiteracy that limit individuals' opportunities and hinder the long-term development prospects of the entire community. Recommendations for businesses and public policy makers concerned with this issue are contained in the second title in this series, *Literacy at Work: Developing Adult Basic Skills for Employment.*

Schools also can strengthen their communities and their own educational offerings by adopting innovative work-and-learning programs. For example, trainees in auto mechanics courses may be available for maintenance work on school vehicles. School settings also might offer opportunities for training vocational education students and technical degree candidates. Students in nutrition courses or those interested in food service careers might work as interns in the school's food service operation.

Administrators in Montgomery County, Maryland, outside Washington D.C., arrange for their students to participate in school-based businesses through the post-secondary Regional Vocational-Technical Center. Students in auto mechanics and body repair programs run two automobile dealerships where they repair, then advertise and sell used cars. They have sold almost 400 cars since the program began in 1978. The dealerships are managed by a nonprofit corporation established cooperatively by the Montgomery County Public Schools and local businesses. Participation by the American Automobile Association, local accountants, bankers, lawyers, realtors, rotary clubs, and the county government indicates a high level of community support for this program. Students also run a flower shop and a home construction business, act as volunteers in small businesses, and serve internships with local fire and emergency medical services, among other programs.[30] The school system has expanded traditional educational approaches for students to gain experience with real-life working situations. Employers can hire graduates attuned to the operation of a business. In turn, the community benefits from increased services.

School-based enterprises have taken root in rural areas as well. In Arkansas, five towns now benefit from businesses made possible by foundation grants and local school contributions. In one town,

students publish the town's only newspaper; in another, students run a maintenance shop. Other projects in Arkansas and Georgia include renovation and conversion of a historic building into apartments, and the operation of a day-care center, a roller skating rink, and a movie theater. The local schools coordinate the operation of these programs and provide services that bolster the local economy.[31]

Administrators should plan school system participation in work force training to help retain local businesses and make the community more attractive to new enterprises. They could:

- Assess school-run education and training programs to see that they supply the types of skills needed by local businesses.
- Learn who represents local educational agencies on the PIC, and explore with local business and public officials the possibility of an appointment to the PIC.
- Work with the local PIC and the Job Service office to coordinate efforts with other training and employment programs.
- Give training-program participants internships or jobs in the school system and look first to local training programs to fill job openings in the schools.
- Familiarize themselves with all state and federal training programs in which they have a role to play and develop a systematic method for keeping in contact, e.g., a designated liaison person for each of these programs.
- Reach out to the broader constituency of adult learners by involving the schools with local adult literacy training.
- Develop work-and-learning programs that increase services in the community while offering opportunities for students to learn the real world of work.
- Be an active partner in community efforts to produce a fully prepared work force as the base for its growth.

Health Care Services

Finally, schools have an unusual opportunity to help the entire community by contributing to local health care services in a cost-efficient manner. School-sponsored health care has several advantages. Healthy students learn more readily and businesses lose fewer work days to the illnesses of their employees' children. Local governments also can extend and concentrate their health care resources on those most in need. The availability of a satisfactory and convenient health care network sustains the local quality of life; it is another piece of an attractive business environment package that local development officials can include in their marketing strategies. For these reasons, this service contribution is worthy of administrators' consideration. Not every community needs school-assisted health care, but it is a good example of cooperation to fill area-specific needs.

Students usually receive some physical and mental health care and learn preventive measures through their schools. In cooperation with community officials, school administrators may choose to invest money, staff time, and/or school facilities in more complete health care and information programs. Such programs may reduce health care expenses for the

local government. Students from low-income families, who often do not receive regular or adequate medical attention, are more likely to need public medical services in the future. If they receive preventive or early care in their school, medical costs later may be trimmed or avoided.

School administrators and public officials should treat these health and welfare expenditures as investments with significant payoffs now and in the future. A five-year study completed recently by Johns Hopkins University Hospital found that more use of nurse practitioners in schools greatly improved students' health, especially in minority and low-income populations. These improvements meant fewer student absences from school and fewer missed work days for their parents.[32]

Some school systems have extended their health care services beyond basic examinations and immunizations. For example, four high schools in St. Paul, Minnesota, serve as sites for clinics emphasizing teenage maternal health and infant care. One of the centers also provides day care for students' children. Run cooperatively by the school district and the St. Paul-Ramsey Medical Center, the St. Paul Maternity and Health Care Project began in 1973 in response to students' exceptionally high pregnancy rates. It has helped to cut the birth rate from 59 per thousand students in the 1976-1977 school year to 26 per thousand in the 1983-1984 school year.[33] These dramatic decreases lowered both school dropout rates and dependency on public aid associated with teenaged births. St. Paul's clinics and many of the 35 similar school health projects find that most of their patients seek help unrelated to birth control. But their success in lowering student pregnancy rates has prompted school officials in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., to set up clinics on a trial basis in 1986.[34]

School administrators should also consider lending medical personnel and equipment to community groups. A district could purchase cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) equipment for training in schools and lend it to community groups for CPR courses. In addition, school health staff members could speak outside the schools on a wide variety of health topics. A local economy cannot be truly "healthy" if large numbers of residents are unable to fill jobs due to poor health.

Administrators should offer more health care services through the schools. They could:

- Identify those school health care resources that can be extended to the community.
- Set up school-community cooperative programs to meet specific needs, such as lower student pregnancy rates.
- Identify personnel or medical equipment (such as CPR equipment or school nurses to teach first aid or prenatal care) that the school system can lend or share with other groups in the community.

Some argue that increasing school system funding is a less effective investment than traditional economic development programs. Publicizing the positive effects of a school system in the community is the best way to defuse that criticism. If citizens and businesses are aware of these issues, they will be much stronger allies. In fact, school and business needs are more complementary than many policy makers and school administrators realize. One need not exclude the other.

4. Making These Ideas Work

School administrators face the challenge of translating the vision of a school system as a multiple contributor to local economic and social vitality into policies and programs. The potential gains are great: stronger ties to businesses, greater community appreciation of and support for educational funding, and a more livable environment. Combined, these elements improve a locality's appeal to new commercial enterprises and prospective residents. Administrators' most difficult task is finding support for their ideas and putting them into practice. However, they cannot institute programs singlehandedly that affect the entire community. Linus Wright, superintendent of the Dallas Independent School District said, "The bottom line: If it's going to get done, educators can't do it alone."[35]

The fundamental responsibility of any school system is to meet the educational needs of its students. Administrators thus have limited time and resources to devote to these "external" goals. New or expanded school-based programs require the cooperation and involvement of businesspersons, economic development groups, neighborhood associations, parent-teacher groups, and service organizations. Administrators should develop strong networks of appropriate public and private-sector leaders in the community. Close ties will help them build strong foundations for more ambitious activities. Forming stronger links within the community, however, is more than a precondition for program development; it is an important goal in its own right.

"Selling" the school system is the necessary prerequisite for putting the mechanisms and strategies thus far described into place. While a public relations role may seem foreign to many administrators, it is a necessary one. Publicizing the accomplishments and potential of the school system is one of the best ways to gather support and bring about joint efforts. Administrators should keep their networks of government officials, businesses, and community leaders informed and involved in their use of school resources to improve the community's economic climate. Public confidence in a school system is an important factor in delivering quality education.

The South Orange-Maplewood, New Jersey, public school system plans to start a public relations program to explain the complexity of managing a $25 million organization to the public. The district's public relations advisory committee emphasized that such an informational program was important in maintaining financial and moral support for the school system. Like many other districts, South Orange-Maplewood is struggling to maintain high-quality programs in spite of a decline in funding.[36]

Positive Parents of Dallas was formed in 1982 to build support for that city's school system. It combined interested members of

the PTA and the local business community to bring the school district's accomplishments to public attention. The Positive Parents program increased public school enrollment, changed public perception of the quality of local schools, and brought new recognition to noteworthy school programs and staff.[37]

The Decatur, Illinois, school district's Partners in Education program also aims to raise the community's confidence in its school system. The program had a new graphic image designed for the system, sponsors programs at individual schools to give their character and achievements more visibility, and publishes a guide for improving school relations with other sectors. This project is supported partially by the Public Education Fund (PEF), a nonprofit organization based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that provides technical assistance and developmental grant support to schools in urban communities.[38]

PEF also helps the four school districts covering Wilmington, Delaware, to remind the community of the value of schools. Wilmington's Public Awareness Campaign and Volunteer Program publishes newsletters and develops radio spots and programs on public education. It has established a telephone information line and computerized volunteer information system. Program members conduct school tours for local corporate executives and real estate brokers—the people who can promote the schools' role in economic development and social service to potential businesses and residents.

Wilmington's marketing campaign has been a notable success. Other school systems should consider adopting this kind of promotional approach. It can include media advertisements, brochures on the system, booths at local fairs, and talks to service organizations. Everyone knows the school system exists, but probably few have considered its varied roles. Marketing can remind citizens and taxpayers of their contributions.

The Arlington County, Virginia, school system recently found its enrollments declining because of the large numbers of single adults and childless couples moving to the area. County officials grew concerned that this demographic trend would erode the schools' support base. They have begun to publicize the importance of good schools, specifically, how they raise real estate values. By tailoring the message for childless taxpaying adults, the county hopes to gain their backing for the schools.[39]

Many of these activities—school tours, radio spots, speaking engagements—are virtually free and can be designed and put into practice quickly. Administrators also can arrange for real estate brokers to bring prospective homebuyers to tour schools with just a few phone calls. Chambers of commerce and businesspersons can do the same. Administrators should look for small but important projects like these to show its allies in business and government and the public that school officials are committed to the community's prosperity.

Steps to Take

To be fully effective, administrators should make themselves experts on the functioning of schools as economic entities within a local jurisdiction. They should have facts and figures ready to quote. They can gather this information by answering the workbook-style questions in

the last section of this book. The first set of questions will lead them through the categories of large direct expenditures all schools make, emphasizing their effects on the local economy. The second set covers school-community programs that some school systems have tried successfully. These examples may be adaptable to local circumstances. Administrators also should identify unique features of their systems or districts that merit highlighting.

On completing this assessment, administrators should find opportunities to publicize the results in appropriate forums, which will vary with individual community traditions. They could sponsor workshops for selected area representatives or community meetings open to any interested persons. They could design a brochure to explain how school expenditures and programs stimulate the economic development process and lead to community betterment. School officials also may want to consider appearing on local talk shows or writing newspaper editorials to discuss school involvement in the community and what it means. Other opportunities include making presentations to local business and training groups and to parent-teacher associations.

Administrators should gear publicity strategies toward the entire community—especially groups that are not normally involved with schools. They should try to involve senior citizens, families with children in private schools, and single adults in school-community programs and seek their ideas on school-related issues. The case should be made to these groups that their property taxes support public schools whether or not they have children enrolled; they benefit from school-based services to the community in addition to their educating children. Administrators also might find ways to remind these groups that good schools give property owners some return. According to G. Donald Jud, professor of economics at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro,

> Public schooling, like other public services, enhances the value of urban property. Changes in the quality of schools in different neighborhoods affect the desirability of those neighborhoods as places to live and, thus, the market demand for property in those areas.[40]

School boards should designate someone as a liaison to community and business groups—perhaps a senior administrator or other top-level staff person. This contact person would be responsible for circulating information and responding to inquiries. Routing community contacts through one person or one office will make them simpler to handle.

Administrators also might recruit a prominent local businessperson as a school advocate to the public. Having a well-known and respected person outside the system touting the schools' accomplishments makes the case even stronger. Other local businesspersons may be easier to reach if the liaison is one of their peers. For example, the Memphis, New Orleans, and Cincinnati school systems have enlisted business allies to help them build support for tax increases for local educational purposes.

To promote and develop school system contributions further, administrators should consider starting an education-development committee that includes

representatives from business and community groups, elected officials, and school officials. These committees can advise administrators on improving their own efforts to purchase locally, increase the schools' role in development incentive policies, improve community services and quality of life, and connect school activities with other community initiatives. In districts where school-community relations are already strong, administrators' informal networks should provide a catalyst for increasing community support and launching cooperative development projects.

School systems should strive to gain recognition as a major employer in the community and get the kind of support community officials give other businesses of that stature. This support might include facility planning assistance, development of a model to measure economic impacts, or forecasts on commercial and demographic trends. Obviously, school system planning should be integrated into a community's comprehensive planning efforts.

School officials also should seek support for their programs at the state level. Minnesota recently passed a community school law that qualifies districts with cooperative community and school programs to state financial assistance.[41] Even though many state education budgets have been stretched thin in recent years, some funds still may be available for school system improvements. Since states appropriate three to five times as much aid as the federal government, school officials should maintain their relationships with state officials. Closer contact will keep them abreast of programs at the state level. State staff also can apprise local school officials of innovative and workable projects undertaken by other districts.

In sum, schools do not operate in isolation from the community. Administrators should seek opportunities to demonstrate to the public that school systems can use their resources to strengthen the local economy. The important tie between a successful school system and long-term community economic well-being ought to be better known. However, those recognizing the importance of educational quality to economic competitiveness is growing steadily.

A successful development strategy strengthens and builds on these natural bonds between a school system and its environment. Working with other officials, the business community, and citizen's groups, school administrators can strengthen these connections and build wider support for school systems. Professor Dale Mann of Teacher's College, Columbia University, states this idea well: "The most helpful outcomes of business-school partnerships are those sorts of political coalitions aimed at major, permanent increases in financial support for public schools."[42] As the examples and suggestions in this discussion demonstrate, school systems have great potential to become even stronger influences on the economic evolution of local communities.

Case Study: The Columbus, Ohio, School System

The Columbus, Ohio, school system has begun to assess the effect of its activities on the local economy. The school system is the sixth largest employer in the community, with an annual expenditure of over $176 million for salaries and fringe benefits for approximately 7,000 employees. The total annual school budget is over $220 million, more than Columbus' municipal government budget. In 1984, the district's net worth was $3.9 billion. Close to 69,000 students attended classes at 123 sites in the 121-square mile school district.

Much of the education budget flows back directly into the local economy in the form of school purchases and community services. Obviously, a significant portion of the payroll goes to local businesses for consumer goods and services. The system spends millions of dollars each year for supplies. Its food services operation spends more than $1 million a year just for milk. Even this amount is only part of the money spent locally in preparing and serving nine million meals each year. The district also supports 500 buses for student transportation. Expenses for running this fleet include drivers' salaries, maintenance, and fuel for the 37,000 miles the buses travel each day. These are only a fraction of the many and complex ways the school system helps to support the local economy.[43]

The school system is careful to use its funds and resources efficiently. For example, over $700,000 was saved in 1983 through an energy management program. Savings are expected to top $1 million per year when the program is fully established. These funds can be devoted to other educational uses that benefit both the school system and the community.

The Columbus school system merits attention because it has channeled its resources not only to improve its curriculum and student activities but to benefit the community more broadly. Through its support of Columbus' economy, partnerships with businesses, training and educational programs for citizens, and additions to overall quality of life, this school system has improved the economic health of the area.

Columbus schools offer many services in conjunction with and in support of business. Companies have contracted with the district to assess the aptitudes and skills of current and prospective employees. It also set up specialized training programs for which a group or business selects the location, timing, and training objectives. For example, a major high-technology firm, Rockwell International, hired the district to train job applicants with potential but whose skills were deficient. On completion of their training, Rockwell hired those trainees that met its standards. The benefits of this program went beyond those selected: trainees not hired by Rockwell still received instruction to be applied to other jobs. Local businesses con-

tinue to benefit from the larger pool of trained job applicants available through the Rockwell program.[44]

Columbus schools also participate in a vocational cooperative-education program in which students work part-time in local businesses. This program promotes smooth school-to-work transitions and gives businesses a larger number of qualified graduates from which to draw. Through the co-op program, over 5,000 students have worked toward careers in business, health care, construction, day care, and the performing arts. The program is popular with students, who earn money while still in school. In the 1983-1984 academic year, co-op students earned more than $2.6 million. Most of these wages were spent locally.

The system has extended vocational education to adults in the community as well. In 1983, over 23,000 persons were enrolled in adult training programs. The schools offered them job placement services along with counseling and career assessment. These kinds of adult programs increase the availability of trained workers and make people less dependent on public assistance. Eighty percent of the graduates found jobs upon completion of their programs and over 1,100 found jobs and no longer require public help. The system also runs the North Education Center, which offers dropouts and potential dropouts another opportunity for career training, high school degrees, and help with job searches.[45]

Columbus' community education program is popular because of its diverse course offerings. Residents can take low-cost courses for high school credit, pursue full- and part-time career training, enroll in a two-year program in small business management practices, learn computer skills, or develop special interests. A partnership formed recently among the Columbus public schools, Ohio State University's (OSU) Office of Continuing Education, and Ohio unions allowed the program to expand. Noncredit university courses now are located conveniently at local schools. Columbus schools and OSU also have worked together in two computer training programs, Compu-Tech and Summer Tech. Both have provided low-cost computer training to 17,000 Ohio residents, ranging from pre-school aged children to businesspersons. These courses also are held at public schools, but are staffed by OSU personnel.

The Columbus system's involvement does not stop at academic programs and business assistance; it includes social service programs that help people with day-to-day life as well. For example, a latchkey program offers low-cost day care before and after school to children of working parents. Children are well supervised, eliminating problems for both parents and their employers. Local citizens benefit further from home and family-life workshops that discuss parenting, nutrition, child development, homemaking, and consumer education. Workshops are offered free of charge at public housing developments, churches, schools, and community centers. Typically these programs are provided by municipal governments, but in this case the school system uses its resources to deliver them more efficiently.[46]

Much of Columbus school administrators' success with cooperative programs is due to the strong, mutual commitment of the school system and the community. It is reflected in the thousands of hours devoted by 3,500

volunteers annually to the schools and the school system's commitment to a broad range of community needs. A volunteer-staffed telephone information line and a brochure entitled "Columbus: A Great Place to Go to School," published by the system, help publicize school contributions to the local community. School officials also are actively involved with the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and with the economic development initiatives of city and state officials.

School administrators base their commitment of resources to the community on the premise that making Columbus a better place to live makes it more attractive for business. Like many cities in the region, Columbus was hit hard by the recent recession. It is recovering by building a strong work force and creating an environment in which development can flourish. Local officials also realize that the school system is an integral component of an economic development strategy and are using the knowledge effectively. The school system's work is recognized and appreciated by the general community as well.

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Assessing Your System

This workbook-style section is designed to help school administrators think through the concept of school systems as economic entities and apply the previous recommendations. Some space for answers is provided in the text, but respondents may attach additional pages for more detailed answers.

Administrators may want to answer all of the questions themselves or assign sections to staff members with expertise in specific areas; if portions are delegated, administrators may want to reproduce questions on separate sheets and then compile a completed workbook. Questions correspond with chapter divisions.

Reassessing Traditional Expenditures

School System Purchasing

1. How much money does the school system spend on supplies and services each year? List separately those items that can be obtained from local suppliers, such as food, office supplies, vehicles, and their associated costs. The total figure gives an idea of the potential cash flow to the local economy.

   $_____ Food (milk, produce, canned goods, etc.)
   $_____ Office supplies (paper products, machines, etc.)
   $_____ Transportation (fuel, insurance, maintenance, vehicles, etc.)
   $_____ Uniforms (band, food service, crossing guards, etc.)
   $_____ Landscaping (supplies and services)
   $_____ Legal and accounting services
   $_____ Outside cleaning and property maintenance
   $_____ Other
   $_____
   $_____ TOTAL

2. Does the school system have a formal or informal local procurement policy? Describe.

3. What items are not available or are too expensive at the local level?

4. Do bidding impediments exist for local businesses? Are they legal or procedural?

   Do they keep local businesses from competing with larger, nonlocal businesses?

5. How are businesses made aware of bidding procedures?

6. Does the school system have a brochure for local businesses explaining bidding procedures, when they occur, the types of goods and services involved, bonding requirements, a school system procurement contact, and payment schedules? If not, has one been considered? Who could be designated to develop it?

   What local government agencies have worked with procurement issues and publications, and how can they assist in this process?

7. What are the possible trade-offs between buying locally and buying only the cheapest products? What dollar amounts would these differences produce?

   Has anyone performed a cost-benefit analysis? If not, who in the system should undertake it?

   What savings figure should be the benchmark for buying outside the area, thus losing a contribution to the local economy?

8. What geographic area is considered "local" by school officials: specific municipal or county boundaries, or a certain mile radius?

9. Do appropriate school system staff know what federal programs are available to help businesses meet standards enabling them to secure school contracts? For example, is there a local SBA Small Business Development Center that gives management or financial assistance to companies and recommends competent businesses to the school system?

   Have officers of such programs been identified and contacted? Has the school system provided these program officers with a copy of its procurement policy or purchasing guidelines?

10. Are staff familiar with comparable programs at the state level that target geographic areas, such as designated enterprise zones, or types of businesses with which a school system procurement program could work?

11. Are neighborhood businesses targeted for development efforts by local officials? Are program officers identified for periodic contact?

Payroll and Staff

1. What is the annual school system payroll?

2. How many full-time and part-time employees are on the payroll?

3. Which staff person is most appropriate to formulate a model that assesses the primary and multiplier effects of the school payroll on the local economy? The model should show the breakdown of typical expenditure patterns by type and estimate the average amount of money that each position contributes to the local economy each year. Approximate figures developed by the Department of Commerce are:

   25% for Housing
   16% for Transportation
   14% for Food
   7% for Insurance
   7% for Fuel and Utilities
   4% for Clothing
   4% for Entertainment

   What local agency contacts (i.e., planning director, assessor, etc.) can provide input into this model?

4. How could the estimates generated by this model be used to build support for needed additional personnel? In any given community, what is the best way for administrators to publicize these results and show that such hiring not only increases the system's educational quality, but also recycles funds into the economy? Community forums? Press and media reports?

5. What local groups and their contacts could be lobbied for support of educational funding? These could include:

   - Chamber of Commerce
   - Merchants associations
   - Local development organizations
   - Citizen and community groups
   - Professional organizations
   - Parent-teacher associations

6. Has the administrator contacted any of these groups? What is the procedure for the administrator or other senior staff person to make a presentation at group meetings on the contributions of the school system and its personnel to the local economy?

7. What opportunities exist for pooling resources with other districts to hire additional personnel? What personnel needs could be filled by hiring a full-time person to work part-time in two or more districts?

   - Advanced or special education?
   - Art or music?
   - Health care?
   - Accounting services?

8. **Has the administrator discussed common needs for specialized, shared, or part-time staff or faculty with counterparts in other districts? What was the outcome of these meetings? What obstacles were identified, and how can they be overcome? Has a task force or committee been established?**

9. Does the state have cooperative educational service agencies in which the school system can participate? If not, discuss forming one with other districts. What type would be the top priority?

10. Would districts pay membership fees and/or a portion of the expenses of these cooperatives? How would these amounts be set?

11. Who would manage the service organization, and how?

12. What advantages are offered by such an arrangement? Savings on payroll? Less expensive audiovisual or computer equipment? Economies of scale for food, accounting, legal, or other services?

13. In what ways would the educational product be improved by developing a service organization?

    - A wider variety of services?
    - More resources for innovative programs?
    - More efficient school service delivery

14. In what ways could local businesses and economic development organizations and agencies benefit from such an organization?

    - Joint program efforts?
    - Targeted management and technical assistance?

15. What state, county, or municipal training and internship programs could provide staff resources to the school system as well as a beneficial experience for the trainees?

16. Could local university or professional school students be recruited to serve internships or work part-time in school positions in their fields—library assistants, nurses' aides, or nutrition aides?

    What nearby institutions would have these types of programs?

17. Has the administrator designated someone to identify and contact the appropriate university departments and coordinate school system needs and criteria? Who is best suited for this? If a coordinator has been named, how much time is devoted to this effort?

18. What important but second-priority staff positions would the school system like to fill but cannot afford? What groups could provide volunteers to fill these needs?

- The local PTA chapter?
- Neighborhood associations?
- Senior citizens groups?
- Civic groups?

Real Estate

1. How much does the school system spend each year on:

$_____ New construction
$_____ Renovation and modernization
$_____ Acquisition of new property
$_____ Maintenance
$_____ Related expenditures
$_____ TOTAL

2. Does the district conduct an annual survey of the school district's real estate holdings? If not, when was the most recent evaluation? Which staff person is most appropriate to initiate and supervise this survey?

3. According to the most recent survey, the school district has:

_____ Number of buildings
_____ Number of land holdings
_____ Other real estate
$_____ Value of buildings
$_____ Value of land holdings
$_____ Value of other real estate

4. Are surveys done with consultation with local planning officials and realty boards? If not, who could identify these contacts and initiate a working relationship?

5. Are local contractors notified for various school system projects? Is there an official or informal local preference policy for repair, modernization, and/or maintenance activities? If not, who could start one? What obstacles to such a policy would have to be overcome? How?

6. Has the district developed a contractor bidding brochure or fact sheet (similar to a procurement guide) for use within the community? Who could serve as liaison with potential bidders?

7. What sources of demographic statistics are available with which the system could project future student populations and demand for educational resources?

8. Is the student population growing or shrinking? Is this trend likely to continue or reverse? Will more or fewer school facilities, personnel, and funding be required?

9. Who could evaluate school real estate circumstances and plans and how they fit into local development plans?

   Who is the most knowledgeable district official to meet with local planners? Have meetings been held? If not, when can they be scheduled?

Utilities

1. How much does the school system spend each year on utilities?

2. Has the school system tried to get utility companies to carry out energy audits on school facilities?

3. Has anyone contacted utilities to ask that they consider the entire system as one customer rather than billing each school separately? Are other types of discounts available in exchange for cooperation in load management?

4. What incentives, such as a percentage of the savings for discretionary use, could administrators offer schools to save energy?

5. Are conservation measures currently in place in the system? Are other options available?

6. Could maintenance crews or shop students install weatherproofing inexpensively? How about water-conservation equipment?

7. Are local companies willing to donate consulting time or materials in exchange for publicity?

1. Does the administrator have solid working relationships with the local planning agency, city council, and mayor's office to involve the school system in economic development planning? If not, how could they be built? What impediments must be overcome?

2. Have these agencies and officials been briefed about the system's willingness to improve the local economic development climate and undertake specific activities? Are they updated regularly on the system's contributions and resources?

   Has the administrator solicited information from businesses, development organizations, and city agencies on cooperative projects with the school system?

   If not, what would be the best way to communicate: bimonthly breakfast meetings, monthly memos, or periodic telephone conference calls?

3. How the quality of education marketed as an economic development incentive? How is its overall contribution to local business and community life portrayed? What assets are touted?

   - Per student expenditures?
   - Teacher qualifications?
   - A diverse curriculum?
   - Student test scores?
   - School facilities?

Surplus Resources

1. Does the system currently maintain empty buildings? How many? What is their size (square footage)? What special marketable features, such as auditoriums or laboratories, do they contain?

   What is their appraised value?

2. What is the total annual cost of maintaining empty buildings in:

   $_____ Security
   $_____ Upkeep
   $_____ Insurance
   $_____ Other

3. Where are these buildings located? Are they near commercial districts? Near the central business district? Adjoining an industrial area? In a neighborhood that needs the kind of services appropriate to school buildings?

4. What is the "best-use" assessment for the property? Could buildings serve as business complexes, small business incubators community resource centers, or agricultural extension service centers?

   Has the administrator advised prospective developers that local government assistance may be available for these projects?

5. What local community groups, colleges, businesses, or government agencies need facilities for technical assistance centers, meetings, classes, or training programs?

6. If structures will be sold, what price can be commanded in the local real estate market?

7. Should buildings be sold or leased? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each type of transaction for the system?

8. What zoning and legal considerations are involved in selling or leasing school property for noneducational uses?

9. What will sales proceeds go for? Have they been earmarked for improving other facilities?

   - New buildings?
   - General educational funds?

10. Have sales or innovative building uses been translated into savings for the school system (or groups using the building)?

    - Lower upkeep costs for the system?
    - Lower rents or purchase prices for the user?

11. What are the preferences of the neighborhood surrounding a school slated for change? How were they solicited? What problems, such as increases in traffic, should be anticipated?

12. Are any older schools eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits?

    If so, how could potential buyers be informed?

School-Business-Community Service Partnerships

1. What school resources could be expanded or shared with businesses and/or the community? Consultation with local government, business groups, and social services representatives is required for thorough

investigation of this point. Who are the appropriate contacts? How should the consultation process be established and structured?

2. What community social service needs could the school system legitimately help fill? Senior citizen meal programs? Orientation and counseling programs for recent immigrants? Combining school and public library operations?

3. What business service needs could schools tackle? For example, could school computer services be donated or sold to local businesses that do not have the expertise or cannot afford their own computers?

   Could school counselors or technical staff be loaned or "rented" for specific business projects during the summer months when school demand for their services is reduced?

4. Could school training programs be expanded to train local businesspersons, packaged for companies, or exchanged for business services? For example, do local companies need computer training?

   Could school faculty train company personnel in exchange for use of company facilities or training in some other skill by the company?

5. Are school skills and equipment widely marketed to businesses? Have professional and development organizations or the chamber of commerce been asked to help with this? Is a brochure available to publicize school services and facilities?

6. When the school system is marketed to prospective businesses, are school business services included in the overall economic development incentive package? How?

Training and Adult Education Programs

1. Do school officials plan and run their training or vocational education programs with advice or cooperation from business groups, nonprofit organizations, and government training programs?

   How? What are the appropriate groups in the community?

2. Who are the educational representatives on the local PIC? Does it conduct training program development and coordination functions in the community?

Has the administrator explored ways to work with the PIC? Has the administrator considered seeking appointment to this group?

3. What training programs already exist in the community? Which ones are especially suited for complementary efforts by the school system?

   - Job counseling?
   - GED preparation?
   - Remedial education?
   - Bilingual education?

   What program or skills areas not covered other ways are likely candidates for school system offerings?

4. From the administrator's vantage point, how do these programs improve the quality of the work force? From the business owner's or manager's perspectives, what is the effect of these programs?

   - Raised educational levels?
   - Increased flexibility of workers?
   - Fewer business training expenses?

5. What skills are needed by local businesses? How does the system assess local skills needs? Is it done on a regular basis?

   - Computer literacy?
   - Word processing?
   - General work skills?
   - Secretarial skills?

6. What is the general level of adult literacy in the community? Which groups or agencies are working to improve it? Does business think adult basic skills are a problem in the work force? What can the school system contribute to its solution?

7. Could school programs be initiated that involve students in running for-profit enterprises, such as stores in local malls, homebuilding companies, or automobile shops? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such programs for the school system?

   Would significant obstacles have to be overcome?

8. Are there local business or service needs that school-based enterprises could answer?

   - A day care center?
   - A neighborhood publication?
   - Computer advisory service?

9. What local training programs could supply workers for the school system? Are they sent regular notification of openings? Is the PIC involved? Does the administrator have dependable program contacts?

Health Care Services

1. What types of health care services are provided to students? Are any available to nonstudents?

   What hours are services offered?

   What resources would be required to extend them?

2. Do school-aged populations have specific health care problems that should be addressed? How can the school system assist in combatting them?

3. Can the school combine resources with government agencies to provide more comprehensive services, thus saving money for both groups?

4. To what extent are school and government officials aware that preventive efforts will help to avoid more expensive future health problems, particularly for low-income students who rely on public health care?

5. Does the school system have health resources that can be loaned or rented inexpensively to community groups, such as CPR or blood pressure equipment?

6. Can health care staff be made available for presentations to community groups on various health issues?

Making These Ideas Work

1. Does the school system publicize its accomplishments and contributions to local businesses and residents? How?

   Have the administrator and other system officials devised outreach methods to promote the system locally?

2. Are tours of schools offered to businesspersons and parents considering moving to the area? Who conducts them?

3. Has the administrator provided local planning agencies and development organizations with information for use in their promotional packages? Has the administrator briefed officials from these groups on school system assets and contributions to the community?

4. Does the school system have a general information package or brochure for distribution to local realtors to be passed on to their clients?

5. Have school officials conducted briefings or made presentations to business and community groups on the system? How were these groups identified? If such presentations have not been made, who should make the necessary contacts?

6. Has the administrator considered appearing on local television and radio talk shows to publicize the system?

   Have school officials prepared editorials or articles for the local paper on the importance of schools and community support for them?

7. Are administrators and other staff persons well versed on figures that illustrate their contributions to the community and the business sector? How often do these groups receive updates?

8. What groups should be especially targeted for promotional campaigns?
   - Small business owners?
   - Parents with children in private schools?
   - Taxpayers with no children, such as senior citizens or single adults?

9. Is one person designated as liaison to community groups? Does this person have sufficient knowledge of local community issues and adequate interpersonal skills for this assignment?

10. Is there a well-known local public or business figure who would be willing to serve as a school advocate?

11. Do publicity strategies include promotion of schools as one of the community's largest businesses as well as an important service provider and its prime educator?

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